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## THE HOME OF A NATURALIST.

(IN MEMORIAM.)

It was a plain old building, and small. It resembled a Scottish farmhouse; and the fields which surrounded it, and the steading, showed that its master was somewhat of a farmer. He had scientific theories regarding agriculture, which he was always putting to practical test. Some succeeded beyond his expectations, others failed; not because Science 'would not work,' but because experiments done on so small a scale cannot pay Science; and then Ignorance, in the form of money-grubbing *practical* farmers, laughed at the naturalist and his theories.

The house stood on a gentle slope, overlooking one of those land-locked fiords which characterise the Shetland Isles. Behind, rose a tiny range of hills, whose varied peaks resemble those of the Cheviots. The house was, as I said, small and unpretending, more so than other houses in the place; but nevertheless, a stranger would have his attention attracted to it before all others, because its lawn and garden were surrounded by more than a hundred species of shrubs and trees. In a land altogether treeless, this feature becomes at once a striking and most pleasing one. Every tree was planted by the naturalist himself, with what cost and labour was known to him only. He watched over their growth with the fostering care of a parent, and thought the time and money he spent upon his little plantation well spent. When asked by the sneering money-grubbers: 'Will that sort of thing make the pot boil?' he replied, smiling: 'Certainly; nothing better than sticks for making the fire burn and the pot boil!'

But what was his joy to find, as the years went past, and his trees became acclimatised, that woodland birds were attracted by them, and finding both shelter and food, took up their abode among the kindly branches. Nor did the birds come merely as stray visitors, but as actual residents. The chaffinch and wood-

pecker, the wren and the hedge-accentor—once but rarely seen, and then only as solitary wanderers—now colonised the shrubbery. The cross-bill, the rose-coloured pastor, the fieldfare, the mealy redpole, redstart, linnet, and blackbird, became familiar visitors. The naturalist's heart rejoiced.

But there was one serious drawback to his delightful contemplation of the feathered wood-folk who had so graciously lighted among his greenery. If he loved birds, he also loved beasts, and of all beasts, a cat was the delight of his soul. Now, cats, like naturalists, take intense pleasure in crouching in quiet corners to watch the motions of winged creatures. To be sure, the quadruped's motive for so doing is different from that of the man, and the result is tragically different too. It was the naturalist's misfortune to see often a mangled minnesinger borne past him by the lithe grimalkin that daily sat, sleek and gentle, upon his shoulder while he dined. She shared his meals, and had not the excuse of hunger for her cruelty. He kept more than one cat, and the havoc wrought by those house-tigers among the birds was too terrible. I suppose their master received compensation in the interesting indoor study which his felines afforded. He was always ready to excuse the cats on the plea that 'it is their nature to;' but he did not fail to chastise them at the same time; and his rebuking was not without effect upon some of these bird-fanciers.

The house-pets knew, one and all, that the dinner-bell was a call to meals, and would flock from various parts of the house or fields to the dining-room door and window. Some were allowed to come into the room. More than once, a feminine chorus of remonstrance was raised by the ladies of the family, and the result was temporary banishment of the animals at meal-times; but the edict was seldom carried into force for more than a week, as even those who had been loudest in requiring their absence, missed their dependents so much, that tacit permission for their recall was given. A tax was levied upon every plate and

dish before it left the table, a process which the interested animals naturally regarded as the great event of the hour. All dry crusts and small slices of bread went into the naturalist's pockets; and what pockets they were! They bulged out on each side; and their owner, when wandering about his fields, was usually attended by a motley throng of those who knew well what those pockets contained. Running about his feet after the manner of Skye terriers was Rough, who had lost one eye, and never could bear the smallest allusion to his misfortune. Dogs do not parade their infirmities, nor will their self-respect permit them to claim either charity or indulgence because of misfortune. One or two cats stealthily kept pace with their master's slow step, seemingly unconcerned in all around, but very wide awake internally. An ox with its large tender eyes would appeal for a caress; while a pony would be shoving its frowzy brow against its master's shoulder, munching crusts with great satisfaction. Dickhalver, a splendid gamecock, usually stalked dignifiedly by the naturalist's side, as one who thought, and in his own way said: 'You and I are reasoning beings, and must set an example of decorum to the lower animals.' A flock of pigeons would hover over his head, sometimes alighting on any available part of his person. A hooded crow, in his handsome gentlemanly uniform of black and gray, accompanied the procession, taking notes. Some ducks would join it at intervals, though these not unfrequently quarrelled with the cats. Even gulls and cormorants occasionally helped to swell the group.

Benjamin, slight and pretty, with large thoughtful eyes, and the overwise ways of a boy whose life is chiefly spent among grown-up people, would oftentimes slip his wee hand into that of the naturalist, whose mind was never so absent that it could not be recalled by that touch. Then what talks they would have, to be sure! Not unfrequently an elfish girl, with thin pale face and restless gait, would add herself to the group, startling the more refined creatures by her abrupt motions, startling her father yet more by her metaphysical ideas upon every subject that ever stirred the thoughts of a mere human being.

On fine summer days, the naturalist would often effect a disappearance by simply stretching himself at full length in a field of grass—tall rye-grass, where the cornerake delighted to nest, and over which the skylark loved to pour his melody. Very different the harsh cry of the one to the song of the other; yet the naturalist loved the voices of both, and would spend hours in their haunts. One might almost have believed that he slept, so motionless he lay; but the girl afore mentioned would at times invade his solitude, and she always found him gazing straight into the sky, or watching the movements of some insect creeping among the surrounding grasses. If happily he were 'i' the vein,' he would tell her what strange cloud-worlds he saw, and how they were peopled by the creatures of his imagination; and then his fancy would carry her beyond cloudland into the Unseen—almost, she thought, into the presence of the Creator; for Nature's God, he said, was best seen and known through His works. An insect losing its way, and hurriedly creeping

over his dress, would prompt some marvellous tale of the scientific world—tales that have all the charm of truth to recommend them. He always affirmed that insects were among the most intelligent creatures in the world. He delighted in the study of them. He would lay a beetle, or caterpillar, or earwig on his hand, and point out its beauties, until his girl would as soon have thought of shrinking from a flower as from a creeping thing. Spiders were great favourites; bees and ants a never-failing source of amusement.

During the summer months, his home in Ultima Thule was frequently visited by wandering 'scientists,' who were always heartily welcomed, and given every assistance in his power. He was at home on almost every branch of science, although he modestly prefaced any information he had to give with a disclaimer. Being an expert linguist, he could always converse with foreigners in their own tongue. It was amusing to observe the varied expression of different sorts of travellers when they were first introduced to his parlour. The snob looked unutterable disgust; the mere tourist stared his wonder and took notes; the man of science was full of curiosity; the lady rather frightened. It was a curious place, certainly. Over the mantel-piece hung useless flint-lock fowling-pieces that had seen service in their day; also a variety of weapons in use among savage tribes; though how boomerang, tomahawk, lance, or arrow-tube got there, their owner only could tell. Among these were bunches of quills; clusters of pony-hair, that were very suggestive in such company, of scalp-locks; some queer stones, fossils, and pretty shells. On the mantel-piece itself were books of every description, rising tier on tier, all well thumbed, yet frequently covered with dust, which had gathered there *not* by the usual mode, but through his experiments upon the coal and ashes in the grate. He had theories about fuel as well as about everything else; and some of the 'notions' which were thought 'so queer,' are now being recognised as full of practical wisdom. The sideboard was crowded with medicine bottles and the chemical apparatus of his profession. The room, in truth, looked a picture of disorder, but in reality was not so, for its presiding genius knew the exact position of each book and bottle. It was only when others intruded themselves and belongings, that the reign of chaos began.

Besides that parlour, where he usually sat, the naturalist possessed what his children called a den. A den it truly was. Oh, the marvels which came out of that place, and the curiosities and useful articles which disappeared into its depths! There is a tradition in the family that once the piled-up heaps were overturned, and a plough was discovered which had been amissing for years. In one corner of this den there hung a skeleton, which acted as a very effectual bugbear to over-curious children and servants. One shelf contained medicine bottles out of number, with brown-paper parcels, bones, and boxes. One parcel contained a portion of skin which had once covered the body of Burke the murderer, who had been dissected in Edinburgh by the naturalist along with other young medicals. Beside that gruesome relic lay a

petrified stone from Mount Sinai. In a corner by itself lay a store of tiny shoes—the wee worn-out things which his little ones had shed. Some of the small feet which had pushed through the leather were lying still enough, after a brief time of restless trotting up and down; and the father hoarded these memorials of feet that were not meant to walk this earth.

Somewhere in the mysterious space in the roof was stored for some years a collection of stuffed animals, the gifts of well-known naturalists. These creatures were periodically put out on the lawn to air; and a queer sensation they produced there. The domestic animals took flight, all except the dogs, which showed fight at first; but soon learned that the fierce, wild beasts had long since ceased to claw. Unfortunately, the small house, crowded with children and other live dependents, had but sorry accommodation for the stuffed beasts, which in course of time began to look mangy to a degree. At last, some wise person suggested that the collection was decidedly 'bad for people,' and a bonfire was made of it. Armadillo, sloth, tiger, bear, and bison, surmounted by a boa-constrictor—whose internal arrangement of arsenical soaped stuffing had been leaking all about the place for months—made a grand pyre, round which the dogs and bairns bounced delightedly.

One especial book over which the children pored until the pictures became as familiar to their eyes as each other's faces, was Bewick's *British Birds*. The dear old volume, 'sair worn,' is now a cherished heirloom.

The naturalist's home was visited by many of our great men. His brother the Laird also opened his door at all times to the stranger; and thus began friendships which were lifelong with many of the lights of the scientific world. It must have been a great pleasure to some of those men to hide, as it were, from the busy world for a short time in that sweet, wild, ocean-girdled bit of land. There they could prosecute the study of Nature without the distracting cares which surround less isolated homes. It must also have surprised them to find an intellect like his 'buried' in such a corner of the earth. Often he was asked why he chose to live there. He might have earned fame and wealth elsewhere, for he was a skilful physician, as well as a naturalist second to few; but fame and wealth were not the objects of his ambition. Far dearer to him the facilities which Shetland offered for the contemplation of Nature and her many marvels. In the home of his choice, which was also the home of his birth, he could exercise a freedom of action such as he could enjoy nowhere else in Britain. He could wrap himself in his black Spanish cloak, or any sort of dress he pleased, and not be called odd. He could shut himself up, and refuse to be disturbed, without offending some powerful neighbour or patron. He could ride his pony everywhere, carry his researches where he pleased without meeting a warning to trespassers stuck up by the way. In short, he preferred a natural happy mode of life to an artificial one, attended by earthly honour, dogged by earthly care; and so he remained in the little paradise he had created for himself.

When a young man, he was a keen sportsman;

but he admitted that even when his love of sport was very great, he always had pangs of conscience after the game was bagged; and when the hunter's zeal was strongest, he never took the life of bird or beast without a good reason for so doing. In later days, he never used a gun. More than once, he had an old fowling-piece repaired, or he bought a new one, and hinted to his boys that he meant to show them he could shoot still; but he never fired a shot. The girl, who was always seeking from him the why and the wherefore for things seen and unseen, wondered, when she heard him tell of his youthful exploits with the gun, why he had lost that love of sport. The wondering at last shaped itself into a question; and she never forgot the look of anguish which swiftly crossed his face as, turning from her, he said: 'You'll learn the reason when you are older, my bairn.' She had often heard the sorrowful tale of a brother lost when she was little more than a baby. He had died through the carelessness of a companion, who had placed a loaded gun across the thwarts of a boat, and some one stepping on the lock, sent the charge through the poor youth's head—a most promising young man, scarcely past his majority. He had all his father's passionate love of natural science, and something more than his father's power of turning his genius to the uses of every-day life. A son to make any parent's heart glad—gentle-tempered, eloquent, persevering, brave, good. An author on Botany at fifteen, a Professor of the same at twenty, who can wonder that from the time he met so hard a fate, and was buried far from his home and kindred, that his father's sensitive nature shrank from the use of that weapon which had wrought such woe! The girl wondered no more; and her surmise was correct.

It must not be supposed that though the naturalist spent much time in the calm contemplation of Nature, that therefore his life was one of pleasure and ease. The work of a country doctor made his life no idle dream. Night and day he was at the service of the fisher population, who loved him for the skill he bestowed upon them, and yet more for the sympathy he showed in all their doings. Many a rare trophy drawn from the depths of ocean, and preserved by the men, not because they saw any value in a bit of coral or a queer shell, but because they knew that 'the Doctor will be glad o' the like'—many a splendid dish of fish, many a well-knitted pair of socks or gloves, showed that his kindness was fully appreciated by his poor patients.

Yet, with all his manifold duties, he found time to study many books. He delighted in works of travel; and affirmed that Gordon Cumming's adventures would be found to be nearer truth than the world generally supposed. Later travellers have confirmed what poor Gordon Cumming said.

The first thing he did when coming down in the morning was to read and meditate over a chapter in the Bible. After that, he read a Dictionary! His children used to wonder how he could possibly find interest in so dry a book. No doubt it was the study of the Bible and Dictionary which made him speak and write such pure, true, and elegant English. At breakfast, the four-footed pets came in with the children, and all received a morsel of some dainty from the naturalist's plate. Breakfast was a meal over which he delighted

to linger, and only the apparition of some factotum whose patience was short-lived, saying, 'If ye please, sir, I'm waiting for,' &c. brought the meal to an end.

Although his manner was always grave, almost to severity, he loved to see others happy; and his children have no brighter recollections than of the long winter evenings, when he made his sweet-toned violin breathe such melody as only a master's hand can evoke from any instrument. Often he merely played dance-music, that the young people might enjoy what he called healthful recreation; but oftener they sat spell-bound while he played plaintive Scotch airs, stirring pibrochs, grand marches, soul-melting melodies, sacred music. Weber's Last Waltz was one of his favourite airs.

His domestic life had been deeply tinged by sorrow; but the great intellect, and yet greater heart, bore him through all, so that he retained in old age all the fresh feelings of younger days. His interest in the progress of science was as keen after he had seen fourscore as it had ever been; and although the number of his pets had decreased, they were not the less cherished when life became a vague dream of the past.

I went not long ago to the Naturalist's Home, to look again upon the place where he had lived and laboured, the spot of all others indissolubly associated with him, where he has left a never-dying memory. There were many changes about the old place, though rock and hill and northern sea change not, nor does the heaven above them; nor indeed did it seem as if the naturalist himself were dead, for wherever I went, I seemed to see and hear him. The skylark was singing over his fields, and the corncrake uttered its quaint complaining among the grass, just as they did years ago when he lay and listened to them. But there were no interesting pets about the house—if we omit his grandchildren—only the necessary sheep-dog, cat, horse, fowl—characterless on the whole, because the wonderful tact of one who understood the nature of bird and beast, was not there to evoke their reason, as it had done that of their predecessors. Some of the trees which he had fostered had grown a good deal, and had thrust their branches across the paths he had trodden smooth when wandering up and down, with bowed head, pondering over the mysteries of creation. I knew my way by those paths to the graves of his household; and I found his resting-place, quiet and solemn, under the shadow of his own trees, with birds he had loved piping on every spray, with no sound of the busy world within reach. He rests there as he wished, beside the Love of fifty years.

As I thought of the long life which had found refuge from care, and comfort for sorrow, in that creation which was given by its Maker for the use of man, I recalled some lines by Longfellow, which seemed most appropriate to such reflections:

He wandered away and away  
With Nature, the dear old nurse,  
Who sang to him night and day  
The rhymes of the universe.

'Come wander with me,' she said,  
'Unto regions yet untrod;  
And read what is still unread  
In the manuscripts of God.'

And whenever the way seemed long,  
Or his heart began to fail,  
She would sing a more wonderful song,  
Or tell a more marvellous tale.

Then bending over that grave, I remembered his words: 'God's book of Nature is the best book I know, and the most perfect revelation of His Fatherhood that can be desired. The man who can study Nature and not see a Father's love, care, wisdom, and direction in it, must be a man with intellect undeveloped.'

## VALENTINE STRANGE.

A STORY OF THE PRIMROSE WAY.

### CHAPTER IV. CONTINUED.—A FURNISHED ROOM FOR A SINGLE GENTLEMAN.

BEHOLD Hiram, two days later, after an interview favourably conducted, and after all due formalities achieved, invested with badge and satchel, and in fullness of time assuming his place as conductor. On his first journey, he was content to repeat the hoarse cries of the driver. On the second journey, he was familiar with his duties. Before the day was done, he had merged his own notions of the English language in the waters of oblivion, and cried 'Benk! Benk! Benk!' or 'Whitecheppel!' like an omnibus conductor to the manner born. He appeared by-and-by in a tall white hat and a scarf of vivid blue and scarlet, and became a man of mark. The regular travellers upon his route began to know him, and he thrived and grew immensely popular. It was noticed at the office at which he paid in his money that the receipts of the vehicle he superintended had amazingly increased, and the authorities put their own construction upon that fact. Mr Search was incorruptibly honest and scrupulously careful. Mr Search was neat and smart in personal appearance, and had indeed become something of a dandy. Mr Search shunned the intoxicating cup, was always up to his work, always good-humoured, yet never without his quaint repartee when needed—could indeed sting upon occasion—in short, he became a most respected member of a not too respected or respectable body. That eminent patter vocalist, The Great Blower, advertised as the author, composer, and only singer of *The Leary Cove*, heard of Hiram, travelled many stages by omnibus in order to study him, and appeared at the Megatherium Concert Hall as the author, composer, and only singer of *The Yankee Toff*, with an imitation of Hiram, which raised him to a very pinnacle of fame amongst the conductors of his day. The ditty of the Great Blower became popular, and Hiram heard it from many barrel-organs. Street youths whistled it and shouted it; nightly choruses with applausive accompaniment of hand and foot, were sung to it at the Megatherium Concert Hall, and Hiram became a celebrity.

'I reckon,' Hiram would say to himself, in contemplation of this and other matters, as he



swung on his strap behind the omnibus, 'that you British people air the feather-headedest on the face o' the globe. It don't take much to set you goin'—that's a fact. An' yet, you're that o-pinionated about the national solidity of character, you make me laff. You air allays flyin' off the handle about things that a civilised infant wouldn't cry or smile at, and then you say: "We air a solid people—we air John Bull—we air—in all our doin's." If ever I fall real low in life, I'll take to lecturin', an' tell you what I think about you.'

The incense of Fame had no effect upon Hiram; and in the course of a few weeks the 'star comique' of the Megatherium had found a new theme, and the raucous ditty of *The Yankee Toff* was forgotten. The conductor's only grievance was that the post he held gave so little time for the pursuit of inquiry into wider and shorter avenues to fortune. His duties began at eight in the morning, and continued until half-past eleven at night. Holidays were few and far between; and Hiram was gradually growing readier and more ready to emancipate himself, when an event happened which influenced his whole career—an event the like of which has influenced more careers than any mathematician now alive would care to count. All sorts of assaults of Fate had Hiram submitted to, and he was beginning to think himself invulnerable, when this stroke came upon him, and he succumbed almost without an effort to avert it, or to recover from it.

Hiram, it must be said, had rather a gallant and insinuating way with the ladies. His manner towards the fair sex was marked by a polish and a finish to which few gentlemen of his profession have aspired. Did Hiram behold a lady on the kerb, the imperious cry of 'Benk! Benk! Benk!' which bade the travelling world be seated and no longer keep him waiting, was instantly modulated to a tone of gentleness, almost of confidence—'Benk, ma'am!' The tone had even a touch of slyness in it, as though it were a secret that the lady chose to go that way, and only she and Hiram knew it. There was something in the manner of his opening the omnibus door to a lady—a *je ne sais quoi*—an artistic tone of mind was somehow impressed upon the action. It soothed old women—it flattered plain women—young and pretty women were not unimpressed by it.

It was his particular hobby to keep time like a ship's chronometer, and to arrive at every pausing-place and to leave it to the nearest possible fraction of a minute. This business-like peculiarity being noticed by people who had regular appointments at settled hours, he secured a constant *clientele* for both journeys, and, amongst other passengers, he every day took up a young girl within a hundred yards of his own lodgings, and set her down at a certain corner in Cheapside, reversing the process in the evening. She was pale and thin; but had that delicate and fragile prettiness which is noticeable in many girls of city breeding. She was scrupulously neat; but her garments indicated no great prosperity. Her mantle was threadbare, her gloves were mended; there was a look of waiting in the pale and patient face.

Hiram regarding these things, felt almost a pang of pity when the morning or evening twopence dropped from the gloved thumb and finger into his own palm. It was hard to take it; and if the vehicle had not been an omnibus, but a carriage, and Hiram's own, he would have set it at her service. The keen winds of autumn mornings were blowing clouds of dust about the streets, and she came no better clad. The threadbare mantle was more threadbare; the neat little linen collar and the neat white cuffs showed woful signs of wear; when closely looked at, the gentle face grew paler and more sad. One morning, Hiram missed the figure at the accustomed corner, and was amazed to find how much he missed it. Without a signal from him, the driver stopped at the corner at which the little milliner or shop-girl was accustomed to alight, and Hiram, in the act of ringing the 'bus-bell' to set him going again, saw her walking down the by-street, and knew that the morning twopence had grown too precious to be missed.

'Poor pretty creature,' said the gentle-hearted Hiram. 'The ile's dried up, an' the barrel o' meal's pretty clean scraped, I reckon. Wonder now, if I could get her to drive gratis. Most likely she'd feel insulted if I asked her.' Hiram watching for the little figure at morning and evening in the gusty streets, saw it sometimes beneath a shabby umbrella, and sometimes so fluttered by the wind that it almost seemed she might be blown away bodily like a leaf.

It so befell that Hiram on one of his rare holidays found himself sauntering down Cheapside at the hour at which the little girl began her journey home. There was the fragile figure, with its hurried yet graceful step, before him. Hiram's long legs kept him within easy distance, though he seemed to do no more than lounge. She went on, looking neither to right nor left; and Hiram followed. He had ample time to study the thin garb, the worn shoes, unfit for the greasy pavement over which the little feet tripped so quickly; and his sharp eyes took note of every sign of poverty, and every struggle to be neat and to hide poverty away. She turned at the accustomed corner, and Hiram, with a shame-faced reluctance to play the spy upon her, could not refrain from following. Right and left, and right and left again. Then she paused before a dingy door in a street of excessive shabbiness, and admitted herself with a latch-key. Hiram sauntered past the house, and saw a card above the door inscribed, 'A Furnished Room for a Single Gentleman.'

'That's near enough,' said Hiram. 'I do not lay out to be a gentleman; but I'll bet I'm single; an' mebbe I'm as near the gentlemanly mark as they are to be found in this locality.' He sauntered past the house again. 'Why not?' he asked himself. 'It's near my starting-point. I'll have a look at it anyway.' He advanced to the door and knocked. The girl herself appeared, and looked at him with a glance of no recognition. 'You have lodgings for a single man, to let?' he said.

'Yes,' she responded. 'Do you wish to see them?' Her voice was gentle like her face, and had a tired tone in it, as the face had a tired look.

Hiram answered 'Yes.' It was dusk within the house; and she left him for a moment, and returned with a candle. Going towards him with the light upon her face, she looked more worn and fragile than before. She led the way up-stairs into a small room, neat and clean, but sparsely furnished:

'What's the rent?' asked Hiram.

'Four shillings a week,' the girl answered. Her glance said so plainly: 'Take it; oh, pray, do take it!' that Hiram's voice was quite husky when he answered:

'That's a very small rent for such a nice little room. When could I come in?'

'Oh,' she said, 'at any time.'

'To-night?' suggested Hiram.

'Yes,' she answered; and Hiram, producing a purse which was by this time fairly stocked, paid a week's rent in advance. The girl's face brightened at the sight of the money, as no face so young and tender ought to have brightened at so trivial a windfall, Hiram thought. 'Poor,' he said inwardly: 'Deadly poor!' There seemed nothing more to linger for. She held the candle aloft, to show him the way down-stairs; and when he looked at her, a sort of halo rested on her hair. The weary expression of her face had changed to one that had a gleam of hope in it. 'Poor,' said Hiram, inwardly, again—'deadly poor!'

'Are you the landlady?' he asked, turning at the first step.

'My mother rents the house,' she answered. 'She is not very well. But you can see her, if you think it necessary.'

'Not at all,' he said, and descended, but turned again in the hall. 'I forgot to ask the name and address,' he explained.

She set down the candle, and entered a room the door of which opened on the hall, returning in a moment with an addressed envelope.

'Martial is the name?' said Hiram looking at it. 'Air you Miss Martial?' She inclined her head gravely. 'Good-night, miss,' said Hiram; 'though I shall be here in an hour.' She inclined her head again, and the door closed behind him. The lodgings he had hitherto used were not more than a quarter of a mile away, and Hiram's whole belongings were easily packed in a second-hand carpet-bag and a second-hand hat-box. The landlady claimed a week's rent in lieu of a week's notice; and he paid it and emerged upon the street.

'You will not die a millionaire, young man,' he said, admonishing himself. 'You are not so encumbered with the pieces that you can afford to chuck 'em blindfold. But Hiram, do you know what that little creetur's face said when you counted them four shillin's down? "Here," it said as plain as a book—"here is an unexpected-meal."' He paused before the last word, and breathed it half aloud. 'Hiram,' he went on, 'how many ordinary-lookin' females have you drove sence you adopted the pro-fesh you live by? How many of 'em's been that poor it's been a pity to look at 'em? An' how many of 'em have you yearned over, Hiram? Come now, how many? Don't you be ridiculous. It's no kind-heartedness in you. It's a pretty face and a nice manner that's fetched you so, sir. Have the murder out, Hiram, have it out!'

You've fell in love, you have, an' you don't know no more about the young woman you've fell in love with than a yeller dog in Constantinople knows about *Pilgrim's Progress*.'

## THE RELIEF OF THE POOR AT HOME AND ABROAD.

THOSE of our readers who have a house of their own—may their number ever increase!—are only too well acquainted with the fact that one of the privileges of their proud position is that they have to pay rates and taxes. And sometimes their minds are sadly perplexed with the multitude of these claims. 'Road-rate, water-rate, sanitary-rate, school-rate, county-rate, poor-rate; dear me, what a number of rates we have to pay now,' cries the householder. 'I wonder whether, in any country besides our own, people have so many calls made upon them?'

Now, this is a very reasonable inquiry. But, as we all know, we must not ask too many questions at once, if we would have answers. Let us think of one thing at a time.

Well, what about the 'rate for the necessary relief of the poor?' It is one of the heaviest of our burdens—many millions annually. Is it all necessary? Do other nations pay such rates as we do? We all agree that some relief must be provided for very poor persons. The poor have never ceased out of the land; nor is there any probability that they ever will in our time. There are poor widows, with children whom they cannot maintain without assistance. There are orphan children whose friends are too indigent to support them, or who have neglected to train them to some industrial occupation. There are men enfeebled by disease or injury; and aged people incapacitated by their very age from doing anything to earn a livelihood. These must more or less fall to be provided for at the public charge. But there are many others whose claim for support is of a much more doubtful character. It has been well observed that 'there never was time or place in which there were not to be found men anxious to avoid labour, and if possible to live at ease; nor any community so poor as not to suffer in some degree from the existence of idle and worthless persons subsisting on the benevolence, or folly, or fears of its members.' The industrious part of the community has always felt it to be a grievance that it should be called upon to maintain the idle.

Poverty and misery are the main conditions on which relief is to be obtained. But the industrious and provident labourer will never consider himself equitably treated until a wide distinction is made between him and his drunken improvident neighbour, when, from differing causes, both come to apply for parochial relief. No doubt, Boards of guardians do attempt to discriminate, but as yet ineffectually. They inquire whether the applicant is a member of a Benefit Club; but they do so with the knowledge that many Clubs are rotten, and that the poor man may have had Hobson's choice—a bad Club or none at all. He may have joined his Friendly Society in sheer ignorance of its insolvency, and have relied upon it till it broke. And it is hard to say that a man is improvident because he has not become a

member of an improvident Society. Our parish guardian feels this difficulty, but cannot see his way out of it; and he ends his speculations by saying: 'Well now, what do they do abroad?' No one, he says, has ever answered that question to his satisfaction.

Rightly or wrongly, there is, however, a pretty general impression that other nations are more thrifty than the English—notably that the French are, even though their average earnings are smaller than ours. How, then, are their poor relieved when in want? and has the method of relief anything to do with thrifty habits? It greatly surprises the average Englishman to be told that there are many countries in Europe in which the destitute have no claim to relief as their legal right. Denmark is the only one which, like England, provides for the relief of pauperism by a special tax. The Danish poor-law closely resembles that of England. The older Danish legislation indicates three classes, to each of which a specific kind of relief is assigned: (1) Old and infirm persons, who are to receive aid in kind, or money, clothing, lodging, and medical attendance; (2) Orphans, or children whose parents cannot maintain them, are to be boarded with suitable persons, or otherwise properly brought up; and (3) Persons or families who are in need of partial help are to be assisted to find work, and if this cannot be obtained, are to receive the necessary assistance. There are only three countries, Denmark, Sweden, and Prussia, in which there is a legislative declaration of the right of every destitute person to be supported by the state—though Denmark is the only state of the three that taxes the community for that purpose. France and Belgium shrink from admitting any such 'right,' fearing lest, by a compulsory poor-law, they should open the door to communism and socialism. Except in the cases of lunatics and of deserted children, there is no compulsory relief in France. All relief that is given professes to be given 'in charity.' Russia and Turkey, agreeing in little else, are alike in having no poor-law. Italy, Spain, and Portugal leave the poor to public charity. Austria, several of the German states, and Norway assist voluntary contributions by grants from local administration or the state. From this it follows that there must be sufficient uncertainty as to provision in sickness and old age in European states generally, to induce people to be provident, whether they are so or not.

Great praise is given both by French and English writers to the French system, which throws the relief of the poor, first on their own families, and then on public honour and public charity. It has its *bureaux de bienfaisance*, which have invested property as a foundation, and its *bureaux de charité*, deriving their funds exclusively from voluntary offerings and collections (ten per cent. on theatre tickets, one-third of the price of graves, certain fines and confiscations, poor-boxes, collections in churches). The subsidies only amount to about one-fifth of the whole. All persons out of work, or burdened with an over-large family, as well as the sick and the aged, are considered fit subjects for relief; but the relief is by no means obligatory.

But if we inquire: 'Does this system of relief provide for all cases of necessity throughout France?' we soon find it does not. There are

thirty-seven thousand communes in France, but only between thirteen and fourteen thousand which have *bureaux de bienfaisance*. And of those unfortunate creatures whom they relieve, the majority get no more than one shilling per month; the extreme meagreness of which dole points, however, to the presumption that the recipients must have some other sources of income. It is, however, a curious fact, that when we pass from France to Belgium, we find a country in which pauperism is treated in the same fashion, but with this result: the proportion of paupers is nearly twelve per cent. of the population; while in England it is a little over four and a half per cent. The causes assigned for this fearful state of Belgian pauperism are: (1) The excessive density of the population; (2) The excessive amount of assistance and alms provided by public and private charity; and (3) Intemperance.

The methods of poor-relief in the United States differ in the different States; but generally, their workhouses are to be regarded as penal institutions, rather than as places for the relief of the destitute poor; and perhaps for that reason, as well as for others, outdoor relief is the prevailing practice. In New York, when an able-bodied person applies for relief, he is required, as a condition of obtaining it, to indorse an order for admission to the workhouse. The following is the form:

'The Superintendent of the workhouse will receive C. D., native of E., who stands committed to the workhouse for (3) months. Aged —. By occupation —. Residence in city or county — years. Cause *destitute*.

(Signed) A. B.  
*Commissioner of Public Charities*  
and *Correction*.

*Department of Public Charities*  
and *Correction, New York.* }

(Indorsement.)

I hereby consent to the within commitment.

(Signed) C. D.'

The cost of maintaining each destitute person in the New York workhouse is one dollar twenty cents per week.

It does not seem possible to learn from the States how to reduce our own poor-rates. The relief of tramps there is a greater burden than it is with us. The New York State Board of Charities stated in 1876 that the greater portion of these tramps were unmarried able-bodied labourers. They judged that two hundred thousand acts of relief, at an expenditure of nearly forty thousand pounds, were annually bestowed on such persons by the public officials of that State.

Another Report gives a curious account of the working of one of their rules. The overseers are paid in proportion to the number of cases they relieve, obviously to make it their interest to overlook none. Apparently, some of these men made a lucrative business of their employment; even keeping 'runners on the road to pick up the members of this wretched class, for the profit there was in keeping them.' The allowance to the officer for lodging and feeding a tramp varied from twenty-five cents to a dollar. In several towns, tramps were arrested and sent to jail; but this turned out to be an expensive method of proceeding.



as the committing justice was entitled to a fee of two dollars, and in some cases the officer was paid five dollars for conveying the vagrant to prison. One justice, we are told, sent a bill to the Board of Supervisors for five thousand pounds for the commitment and transportation of tramps for a single year!

We cannot, therefore, hope to derive much instruction or guidance from our neighbours as to the best way of improving our system of relief. Intemperance, improvidence, wastefulness will always produce and aggravate pauperism. But these are no new discoveries; and the fact remains that notwithstanding improved administration and Temperance Societies, we expend nearly eight millions a year in poor-relief. We cannot diminish the allowance to the pauper; it is small enough already. We can do little more in the way of repression. But a proposal has been made which in the main indicates a way by which our burden might be diminished with advantage to all. Broadly stated, it is this: That every man ought by law to be compelled in his youth to commence to provide against destitution in sickness and old age, by paying, into an Insurance Office possessing a national guarantee, a certain weekly instalment of his wages. Any such scheme, to be successful, must be on the ground that a distinct advantage should accrue to himself when no longer able to work, and with the promise of a fixed and specified payment to his widow in the event of his death, be it sooner or later.

Were the scheme adjusted in this direction, and were the government to back it up by its invaluable security, it would be of great advantage, not only to the improvident, but to those also who endeavour to be provident. Though there is much to be said in favour of Friendly Societies, these are not in every case to be relied on. Nothing short of a National Club, or a Thrift Society such as we lately noticed in our columns, would meet the case. A man would find it wherever his work carried him. And having made up the required sum in regular payments, he could never afterwards lose its advantages.

Next, it would compel the improvident to become provident. Without compulsion, the thriftless will never be made provident. There are thousands of young labourers who spend their five or ten shillings a week in drink and tobacco, and never lay by a penny. They contaminate others by their example, and make them grudge the money they have been induced to pay into their Clubs. Some persons are startled at the sound of 'compulsion,' and say: 'Oh, but you can't *compel* men to be provident.' But consider a little. There is compulsory vaccination for infancy, compulsory education for childhood, compulsory destruction of unwholesome food, compulsory slaughtering of cattle; why should there not also be compulsory thrift? But, indeed, the compulsory principle is in operation even now, and will continue to be in operation so long as we must provide for others. We are compelled to pay for the necessary relief of the poor. But why should we be compelled, as we are now, to pay for *unnecessary* relief? And that relief is unnecessary the need for which might have been provided against. 'Given A, the provident, thrifty, frugal Englishman; and B, the improvident, wasteful, pauper Englishman. Which is

the greater interference with the liberty of the subject, to make B provide for himself by compulsion if need be, or to make A, besides providing for himself, provide for B as well, and by compulsion, as he has to do at present?'

It is obvious that the adoption of a scheme founded upon the foregoing principle, would promote thrift in the most practical way. The nest-egg would always be in the nest, and the habit of putting by be systematically taught; while the habit of waste would be beneficially checked, and the advantage to the ratepayer obvious.

We need not anticipate, with some sanguine persons, a total abolition of the poor-rate; but its diminution would in due time follow the application of the principle, that every one *when he is able* shall provide against the time when he may become unable to maintain himself.

## THE DROPPED TELEGRAM.

A TALE IN TWO CHAPTERS.

### CHAPTER II.

AFTER referring to certain matters of business in which we had been formerly connected, I said to Loter: 'You know everybody in Manchester, I suppose; do you know a Mrs Le Ferrier?'

'Of course I do,' he replied. 'What about her?'

'I want to know *all* about her.'

Loter here got up, and looked round to see there were no listeners; and then gave me the following history of my friend.

'Mrs Le Ferrier was married about eight years ago. Her husband was much older than she, but very rich, and was a staid formal man, a banker by profession. Shortly after his marriage, he found that his wife could not exist without the admiration of every man who for the time being happened to be nearest to her. At first, he felt flattered by this notice; but after a time he objected to his wife being always out at dances or picnics, and being spooned upon by any one, from a banker's clerk to the member for the county. He objected; and a great domestic scene, I heard, occurred. During the last year or so, matters were nearly coming to a climax, for a certain Mr A—— seemed the especial favourite, although some half-dozen other men appeared also to share her notice. Mr Le Ferrier, however, obtained certain information relative to this Mr A——, and forbade his wife seeing him or speaking to him. She, from what I hear, gave her husband a solemn promise that she would not again meet him. Whether this promise was or was not broken, I don't know; but Mr Le Ferrier a short time ago made arrangements for his wife's leaving Manchester for some seaside place, so as to get her out of the way of Mr A——; and I have heard nothing of her for some weeks. She is a very handsome woman, and fascinating in her manner; but a most dangerous woman to any but the most experienced men. That's my report. Now, tell me why you want to know.'

'She is staying at the boarding-house where I am,' I replied.

'Wh-e-w!' whistled my companion. 'And has she cast a spell over you?'

'Not a bit; but I knew she must be a



woman with a history, and I was curious to hear it.'

'Avoid her, my boy, if you want to keep out of a scrape, for she is unscrupulous, and has made much mischief already.'

On the following morning at breakfast, a telegram was brought to Mrs Le Ferrier, which she opened and read, turning first red, then white. Her evident excitement caused my little cousin to say: 'No bad news, I hope?'

'No; it's only from my husband,' she replied, 'and he wants an answer at once.'

Mrs Le Ferrier left the room, and shortly walked out towards the telegraph office. During the whole day, she seemed excited and nervous, starting when she heard a knock at the door; a condition which caused my little cousin to express an opinion that she feared Mr Le Ferrier must be a cross old man, as his telegram had so worried dear Mrs Le Ferrier.

My instincts told me that the telegram was not from Mr Le Ferrier. I had no proof that my impression was correct, but still I felt convinced that it was.

At about eight o'clock that evening, a servant came to Mrs Le Ferrier, and told her a gentleman had called to see her. She instantly started up, and putting on a waterproof, which greatly concealed her figure, and a hat and thick veil, went to the door, and then walked off with the gentleman. It was past eleven o'clock when she returned. I was sitting in the smoking-room when she passed the door and ran up to her room, which was on the same landing as mine. She seemed hurried and excited, and anxious to escape observation. I sat for some time meditating on the peculiarities of human nature; for among the curious things I saw was, that Mrs Le Ferrier would have given much to have Charley once more under her spell; her pride seemed hurt that she could not bring him to her feet again, her manner to him being a strange mixture of spite and conciliation. Having finished my pipe, I went up to my room, and was met on the top of the stairs by a servant, who said he had just picked up a telegram, which was without address. I took it in my hand and looked at it. A portion was torn off the paper, and with this the name of the recipient. The telegram was as follows:

From A — To Mrs —, Sandmouth. — Yours received. So glad we can meet. Will be with you about eight to-night. Shall be very cautious.

I could not resist a smile, as I read the sentence about 'caution,' and compared this with the fact of the telegram being dropped on the stairs. The name A — was given in full, and it was the name of the person whom, Loter told me, Mrs Le Ferrier had promised not to see. One thing was certain: the telegram was evidently for this woman, who had slandered my dearest friend. But she was now in my power; and what was more, she did not know it. The contents of the telegram were known to me only, and as long as they remained so, she was safe. I placed it again in the servant's hand, and asked him to go to Mrs Le Ferrier's room, and deliver the telegram to her, but to say nothing as to any one having seen it.

At the breakfast-table, Mrs Le Ferrier was calm, elegant, and deeply sympathetic with my little cousin, who hoped she had got over the worry of the telegram.

Mrs Le Ferrier said: 'Oh, it's all right. My husband sent one of his clerks here last evening about money matters, and I had a lot to do; but it's all right now.'

I dared not look up, lest Mrs Le Ferrier should see my face; for I could not repress a smile as I listened to this woman stating such falsehoods with a silvery, innocent, gushing voice, as though no guile had ever passed her lips.

These remarks decided my course of conduct. I would bring this woman to her knees, and make her confess that she had slandered my dear old friend out of spite and malice.

Retreating to the solitude of my bedroom, I matured my plan, and then entered the drawing-room, where I found Annie and Mrs Le Ferrier sitting with their arms round each other's waists in close conversation. I proposed a walk on the beach, to which the two ladies consented, though Annie said she must bathe. This suited my plan, for then I might secure a *little-a-little* with Mrs Le Ferrier. We went out of our house and walked down towards the bathing-machines; on nearing which, my cousin said: 'Now, I will leave you two together, and will go and bathe.'

I proposed to Mrs Le Ferrier that we should stroll on to a ledge of rocks about half a mile along the beach, a locality quite retired. As we walked on, I spoke of various indifferent subjects, for my plot must burst upon her suddenly and without interruption. We reached the rocks, and sat down, the sun shining brightly on the dancing waves.

'What a lovely view this is!' exclaimed Mrs Le Ferrier. 'I shall always think of it with pleasure, now that I have seen it with you.' As she made this remark, she turned her face towards me, and looked at me as though she were the soul of truth.

I gazed straight before me, and did not reply to this gushing remark. I had made up my mind to commence the fight at once, lest this woman should, like the serpent, fascinate me by her gaze, and cause me to relent.

'A penny for your thoughts!' said my companion, as she smiled at me, and gazed as though I were the one man in all the world.

'I was thinking,' I replied, 'what a pity it was that you had been so unjust to my old friend, Charley Steinmay.'

'Unjust!' exclaimed Mrs Le Ferrier. 'Why, it is he who has been most insulting to me. Why, one morning he was more than rude to me, and accused me of being a flirt, and I don't know what besides.'

'And you believe that what he said was quite unjustified?'

'Of course it was. I can't help it if men take a fancy to me, and so on.'

'Still, admitting that Charley was not justified in saying you—well—liked admiration, was that an excuse for you to accuse him of making undue advances to you?'

'I think it was a great liberty for him to say I was a flirt.'

'But pardon me, Mrs Le Ferrier; that is not

what I mean. You said Charley was not the sort of person to be trusted with a lady.'

'I have not said anything but what he deserves, for he was horribly rude to me.—But don't let us talk any more about this.'

'It is just this I do want to talk about; and I want you to do me a favour, and to perform an act of justice. I want you to write me a note saying that you made these charges because you were angry with Major Steinmay for telling you that you were a flirt; and that you regret having so spoken.'

Mrs Le Ferrier gave one of her little silvery laughs, and said: 'How ridiculous! as if I should be such a fool as to write such a thing. No. Your friend insulted me, and so it is war to the knife between us.'

'But you admit that the insult, as you now term it, was limited to his telling you that you were a flirt; and perhaps you had made him think you liked him very much, when you were merely trifling with him.'

'Well, to call me a flirt was bad enough. But I won't hear any more about him. If you can't make yourself more agreeable, I think we had better return.' She jumped up, and shaking the few grains of sand from her dress prepared to walk off.

I did not move, but looking at her, said: 'I'm so sorry it is war to the knife between you and Charley; because, if it is so between you and him, it is also war between you and me; for he is too dear and tried a friend for me to see him slandered and remain quiet; and believe me, Mrs Le Ferrier, I possess the knowledge of that which, were I to declare it, would be your ruin.'

She looked at me with a wild resentful look, her face becoming almost crimson. As I met her gaze, I wondered how I could ever have thought her beautiful; she seemed the embodiment of some of the lowest attributes that belong to our nature. If she had possessed a dagger, I should not have felt safe in lounging as I did calmly on the sandy beach.

'What do you mean?' she almost hissed.

'Sit down, Mrs Le Ferrier,' I said, 'and I will tell you; but please, don't interrupt me until I have finished my little tale. All that has occurred between you and Charley is known to me. He was foolish and impressionable, I admit; and when he overheard you tell young Finch that you could not think of him when Finch was present, you did him a great kindness, for you opened his eyes to his folly. When, however, you slandered him to my cousin, you were committing a wicked act of revenge.'

'How much more of this nonsense am I to listen to?' she exclaimed.

'Well, by a singular combination of circumstances I am acquainted with the promise you made your husband relative to neither seeing nor meeting Mr A—— again; and I know what the result would be, if your husband knew that you had written to Mr A—— asking him to meet you here. The banker's clerk, as you told us, with whom you had business to transact from eight till eleven p.m., I know to have been Mr A——. The telegram which you received at breakfast, and which you told us was from your husband, was from Mr A——, and was arranging the meeting

which you had with him last night. You had torn your name off the telegram, and had afterwards, by accident doubtless, dropped it, and it was shown to me by a servant. It was I who directed him last night to take the telegram to you. Now, Mrs Le Ferrier, if it is to be war to the knife between you and Charley, the contents of that telegram will be communicated to your husband. I need not remind you of the consequences.'

I had kept my eyes fixed on her as I deliberately revealed the cards in my hand. Her face was a study—first rage, then consternation, then despair. In the conflict of passion, her beauty had quite vanished.

She sat for fully a minute, her face covered with her hands. She then turned to me, and said: 'I think you are the greatest bear I ever met!'

'I accept that opinion as a compliment,' I replied. 'But you must admit, that in our war to the knife I have gained the victory. Now, Mrs Le Ferrier, I do not wish to be a bear; but I have a horror of that malicious slander in which I am sorry to say some women delight. No person besides myself knows that Mr A—— came here by appointment to meet you. No one knows except myself what was the purport of the telegram. I am strong enough to dictate terms, and I will come to terms with you. Write me that letter I asked for, and I give you my word of honour the matter will never escape my lips.'

'But what use do you propose to make of that letter?'

'I intend to show it to my cousin, and so prove to her that your accusation against Charley was untrue.'

'I could not endure that she should know it was, for she loves me very much.'

'It is for you to decide,' I replied. 'I will meet you here to-morrow at the same hour. If you bring a satisfactory letter, the thing will be at an end. If not, you must be prepared for the consequences. I cannot have my friend's name longer traduced. Shall we return now?'

'You might have the politeness to help me up,' she said; and as she took my hand, she gave it a squeeze and said: 'How can you be so unkind to me?'

We walked in silence towards the groups assembled near the bathing-machines, and found my cousin ready to return. I left her and Mrs Le Ferrier to walk home together, and took a brisk turn, to think over the success of my plot.

True to her appointment, Mrs Le Ferrier came to our rendezvous on the following morning. Her letter was almost word for word what I had verbally dictated. After reading it, I placed it in my pocket-book, and I made her a definite promise to observe her secret. I hoped she would not think too severely of me for what I had done to save my friend's reputation.

'I shall hate you all my life!' she exclaimed.

'Perhaps that will be a safer condition than if you pretended you loved me, as you did to Charley, and (but never mind) the other!'

She jumped up, and said: 'Good-morning, Mr Homely. I hope we shall never meet again.'

I made her the most polite bow, and smiled as pleasantly as though she had paid me the greatest compliment, and resumed my seat on the sand.

When I returned to the boarding-house, I found every one surprised at the sudden departure of Mrs Le Ferrier. She had left Sandmouth suddenly, no one knew why. Poor young Finch seemed distracted. My little cousin actually cried, and declared that Mrs Le Ferrier was the nicest, most beautiful, truthful, and unaffected woman she had ever met.

I allowed two days to elapse before I spoke to Annie. An opportunity then occurring, I said: 'Do you really believe what Mrs Le Ferrier said about Charley?'

'Of course I do; for I don't believe she would tell an untruth, or even misrepresent things, for the world.'

I smiled at the self-confidence of my dear, little, simple-minded cousin, and said: 'Supposing Mrs Le Ferrier herself admitted that she had slandered Charley out of spite, what would you think then?'

'I don't know what I should think, because it is impossible that she could say such a thing.'

I took Mrs Le Ferrier's note out of my pocket-book, and gave it to Annie, saying: 'Read this.'

She read the letter slowly, and then looking at me, said: 'Good gracious! what does this mean?'

'A confession from Mrs Le Ferrier that she told you what was not true.'

'But what object could she have in saying such things?'

'It is always somewhat difficult to give a reason for a woman's acts; but you may have heard that "there is no fury like a woman scorned." Perhaps you had better not inquire more, as regards details. But you now see how unjustly you have been prejudiced against Charley, who is the best fellow that ever lived.'

'Yes; I have indeed,' she replied. 'But who could believe Mrs Le Ferrier was so false!'

The ice was now broken; and though I felt bound in honour not to tell Charley one word about the letters or telegram, or my knowledge of Mrs Le Ferrier's proceedings, I yet hinted that I knew my cousin had changed her opinion of him. She, dear little girl, with a high sense of justice, now tried to make up for her former half-rudeness, and she and Charley became great friends. Before a month had elapsed, they were engaged; and in six months were married. Charley's Indian appointment was not filled by him, for he exchanged, and shortly filled an important staff appointment in England. We have been closer friends than ever since his marriage; for he knows I had some hand in clearing away the aspersions cast on his character; but he never suspects the course I adopted.

Of Mrs Le Ferrier, I have heard much since, but nothing that I care to relate in these pages. She was that most fearful deformity, a beautiful, unprincipled woman, who lived only on admiration obtained at any cost. Such characters fortunately are not common, though they exist, and are too often the causes of more mischief in this world than a hundred good and true women can undo. Had it not been for the dropped telegram,

she might have been the cruel cause of preventing two congenial persons from travelling the path of life hand in hand.

# THE ART OF EPIGRAM.

THE art of epigram is a lost art. When we have written this, it occurs to us that it would perhaps be nearer the truth to say that it is an unpractised and neglected art. There is probably enough of poetry and wit still remaining in the world for the production of good epigrams; but this species of composition may be said to have fallen into desuetude and gone out of fashion. Yet no form of poetical composition has at different periods been more popular, and few are more fitted to be popular.

The epigram has an ancient and honourable history, having been much practised among the early Greeks, with whom it undoubtedly reached its highest stage of perfection. It is not an uncommon thing now to suppose that an epigram only merits the name when it possesses some humorous, biting, or sarcastic quality—when it as nearly as possible answers to the description given in the quatrain:

The qualities rare in a bee that we meet,  
In an epigram never should fail:  
The body should always be little and sweet,  
And a sting should be left in its tail.

The above quatrain indicates a very limited idea of the scope of the epigram, and but a low estimate of its character. The Greeks indeed desiderated point in their epigrams, but not necessarily humorous or ironical point. What they aimed at was simply brevity in expression and completeness of thought, and this they achieved in their epigrams in an eminent degree. An epitaph written on the tomb of Plato by Speusippus, is an admirable specimen of an early Greek epigram:

Plato's dead form this earthly shroud invests;  
His soul among the godlike heroes rests.

Anacreon wrote some very graceful epigrams. The following, addressed to his lady-love, is happily rendered by Ambrose Philips:

Why so coy, my lovely maid?  
Why of age so much afraid?  
Your cheeks, like roses to the sight,  
And my hair, as lilies white;  
In love's garland, we'll suppose  
Me the lily, you the rose.

The following beautiful epitaph on Sophocles is generally accredited to Simmias of Thebes, who was an intimate friend of Socrates. The translation will be found in the five hundred and fifty-first number of the *Spectator*:

Wind, gentle evergreen, to form a shade  
Around the tomb where Sophocles is laid;  
Sweet ivy, wind thy boughs, and intertwine  
With blushing roses and the clustering vine.  
Thus will thy lasting leaves, with beauties hung,  
Prove grateful emblems of the lays he sung,  
Whose soul, exalted like a god of wit,  
Among the Muses and the Graces writ.

This, on a maiden in love, is by Sappho, translated by Moore:

O my sweet mother, 'tis in vain—  
I cannot weave as once I wove—  
All wildered is my heart and brain,  
With thinking of the youth I love.



Plato wrote several very fine epigrams. The following, designed to express how the light of beauty remains unextinguished in death, is translated by Shelley:

Thou wert the morning star among the living,  
Ere thy fair light had fled;  
Now, having died, thou art, as Hesperus, giving  
New splendour to the dead.

In the early Latin epigram, we mark a distinct falling away from the high Greek standard. Latin epigrams rarely have the same refinement, chaste simplicity, and lofty thought. It was not so much that the Romans were intellectually incapable of vying with the Greeks in this species of literary exercise, as that they chose to follow inferior models, and to degrade the epigram to ignoble uses. For flattery of emperors, for abusive political satire, for humouring the depraved popular tastes, rather than striving to elevate them—these were among the objects which Martial and his contemporaries employed their powers as epigrammatists. Some of Martial's verses indicate that he might have rivalled the Greek poets, had he made them his models more frequently than he did. But the bulk of his epigrams are characterised, to a more or less degree, by scurrility, triviality, or servile flattery. He wrote some fifteen hundred of these short poems; but few among this large number can now be read with either pleasure or edification. We give two specimens of his better works—the first of his serious, the second of his lighter manner:

#### ON ANTONIUS.

Antonius is arrived at seventy-five,  
With all the ease and comfort life can give;  
Safe from the voyage of a length of years,  
Looks back with joy; nor death approaching  
fears.

Not one of all his days can irksome find,  
Not one but he with pleasure calls to mind.  
Thus a good man prolongs his mortal date;  
Lives twice enjoying thus his former state.

#### TO AUCTUS.

My works, the reader and the hearer praise.  
They're not exact, a brother-poet says.  
I heed him not; for when I give a feast,  
To please the cook I care not, but the guest.

With the Romans, the epigram was employed as a vehicle for badinage and satire, to a much greater extent than among the Greeks. The following, by Lucilius, a writer of the second century—translated by Dr Jortin—is a favourable specimen of a Latin humorous epigram:

'Thou little rogue, what brings thee to my house?'  
Said a starved miser to a straggling mouse.  
'Friend,' quoth the mouse, 'thou hast no cause to  
fear;  
I only lodge with thee; I eat elsewhere.'

The Arabians practised the art of epigram-writing with marked success. We have a large number of Arabian epigrams rendered into English by Mr Carlyle, Cambridge Professor of Arabic at the close of last century, who published a volume of translations of Eastern poetry from its earliest times. From the one or two specimens of Arabian epigrams which we give, the reader will see that Eastern poets touched these things very skilfully and gracefully. This is by the Calif Radhi Billah, who was the twentieth Calif of the Abbas dynasty, and who died 951 A.D.

#### TO A LADY, ON SEEING HER BLUSH.

Leila! when'er I gaze on thee,  
My altered cheek turns pale;  
While upon thine, sweet maid, I see  
A deep'ning blush prevail.  
Leila! shall I the cause impart,  
Why such a change takes place?  
The crimson stream deserts my heart,  
To mantle in thy face.

The above has been thought to be 'one of the most elegant epigrams to be found in any language.' The following, addressed to a cupbearer, of the same name as the lady in the verses just quoted, is, we think, almost equally graceful:

Come, Leila! fill the goblet up;  
Reach round the rosy wine.  
Think not that we will take the cup  
From any hand but thine.  
A draught like this were vain to seek;  
No grape can such supply—  
It steals its tint from Leila's cheek,  
Its brightness from her eye.

The conceit in the following, by Isaac Ben Khalif, 'On a Little Man with a very Large Beard,' is quaint and original:

A man like thee scarce e'er appeared—  
A beard like thine—where shall we find it?  
Surely, thou cherishest thy beard,  
In hopes to hide thyself behind it.

Bonnefonius, a Latin poet of the sixteenth century, has a pretty epigram, which we have endeavoured to render thus:

In this tiny wreath are wed  
Roses white and roses red.  
Take it, maiden fair, and seek  
In the white my love-pale cheek;  
But in the red, a token see  
Of my fond heart fired by thee.

The epigram lent itself readily to short love-poems, and it will be seen, from the selections already quoted, that this was a favourite use of it among early writers.

With the space at our disposal, our survey of the subject must necessarily be very rapid, and it now falls to notice the epigrammatists of our own country. Among these, Ben Jonson and Herrick take a high place. The former especially excelled in two forms of epigram—in monumental inscriptions and in humorous epigrams. One of the best examples of his humorous manner is the quatrain which he addressed to a vintner:

God is best pleased when men forsake their sin;  
The devil's best pleased when they persist therein;  
The world's best pleased when you do sell good  
wine;  
And you're best pleased when I do pay for mine.

The best of Herrick's epigrammatic verses are characterised by a brevity and simplicity of expression, and a grace and purity of thought, which entitle them to rank with the best examples contained in the Greek anthology. Every one must admit the following epitaph on a child to be of extreme grace and beauty:

Here she lies, a pretty bud,  
Lately made of flesh and blood,  
Who, as soon, fell fast asleep,  
As her little eyes did peep.  
Give her strewings; but not stir  
The earth that lightly covers her.

Matthew Prior wrote a large number of epigrams of varying merit. A smart one was that on Dr Radcliffe, who, besides being a physician, was a wit and brilliant conversationalist :

I sent for Radcliffe ; was so ill,  
That other doctors gave me over.  
He felt my pulse, prescribed his pill,  
Said I was likely to recover.  
But when the wit began to wheeze,  
And wine had warmed the politician,  
Cured yesterday of my disease,  
I died last night of my physician.

Dr Abel Evans, a man of much talent, the friend of Pope, wrote, among many epigrams, one on Dr Tadlow, remarkable for its humorous terseness. Dr Tadlow was an exceedingly stout man :

When Tadlow walks the streets, the paviers  
cry :  
' God bless you, sir ! ' and lay their rammers by.

That Pope should have written good epigrams, was to be expected ; the quality of his intellect exactly fitted him to excel in this direction. The style of no English poet is so marked by brilliant antithesis, so that in a score of lines by Pope you may have half as many epigrams. The epitaph which he penned on Sir Isaac Newton, but which was not placed on Newton's monument in Westminster Abbey, a prose Latin inscription of inferior merit being chosen in preference, is regarded as one of the finest in the language. A ' peerless epitaph,' it is styled by the Rev. H. P. Dodd, an authority on these matters, to whose labours and scholarly research we are indebted in this article :

Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night ;  
God said : ' Let Newton be ! ' and all was light.

The following lines, ' On two Millers of Manchester, named Bone and Skin, who wanted to monopolise corn,' is by John Byrom, the author of the pastoral *Colin and Phoebe* :

Two millers thin,  
Called Bone and Skin,  
Would starve us all, or near it ;  
But be it known  
To Skin and Bone,  
That flesh and blood can't bear it.

The next is by Robert Dodsley :

MARRIAGE IN HEAVEN.

Cries Sylvia to a reverend Dean :  
' What reasons can be given,  
Since marriage is a holy thing,  
That there is none in heaven ? '  
' There are no women,' he replied.  
She quick returns the jest :  
' Women there are ; but I'm afraid  
They cannot find a priest.'

The epigrams of Lord Lyttelton and Horace Walpole are among the best of their kind which we possess. Very pithy and neatly turned is one by the former, on a ' Bust of Lady Suffolk in a Wood at Stowe : '

Her wit and beauty for a court were made ;  
But truth and goodness fit her for the shade.

And it would be difficult to surpass the following by Walpole, in the way of elegant compliment :

TO MADAME DE DAMAS LEARNING ENGLISH.

Though British accents your attention fire,  
You cannot learn so fast as we admire.  
Scholars like you but seldom can improve,  
For who would teach you but the verb, *I love* ?

A prolific writer of epigrams was Dr Wolcot, the well-known Peter Pindar ; yet few of his productions are models of epigrammatic composition. He possessed undoubted humorous and poetical powers ; but his epigrams are for the most part disfigured by coarse satire and personality. He may be regarded as the English Martial. It would be difficult to imagine anything more offensive than the following quatrain, ' To Lady Mount Edgcombe, on the Death of her Pig Cupid : '

Oh, dry that tear, so round and big ;  
Nor waste in sighs your precious wind !  
Death only takes a single pig :  
Your lord and son are still behind.

But Wolcot occasionally wrote epigrams of a more agreeable style. He was once on a visit to Lord Nelson, and while lying awake in bed, reading, set fire to his nightcap, which belonged to his host ; whereupon, he returned the half-burned cap to its owner with the following lines :

Take your nightcap again, my good lord, I  
desire,  
For I wish not to keep it a minute ;  
What belongs to a Nelson, wherever there 's fire,  
Is sure to be instantly in it.

Our space permits of but one more example of the modern epigram. It is by Thomas Hood, and is both neat and characteristic of that fine humorist's quaint paradoxical vein :

ON THE DEATH OF A GIRAFFE.

They say, God wot !  
She died upon the spot :  
But then in spots she is so rich—  
I wonder which ?

CURIOUS PROPOSITIONS.

If everything in this world is not quite so perfect as it should be, it is not from any lack of advisers ; for there are always plenty of people wise enough in their own conceit to believe that there is nothing which they are not able to amend, and that more thoroughly than anybody else. And yet, in spite of our would-be benefactors, we are much in the plight of the poor fellow who complained that the doctors prescribed him many a medicine, but never a remedy. Not so very long since, it was gravely proposed to put ailing and aged folk out of their misery by a summary process making killing no murder, by giving it a pretty name. Now, we are informed that there is no necessity for such cruel kindness, for by transferring fresh blood into the veins, when the powers of nature begin to fail, the decay of the tissues will be arrested, the system rejuvenated, and life indefinitely prolonged ; the only difficulty being to obtain a sufficient supply of vitalising fluid. Luckily for those who would never say die, a medical practitioner professes his ability to produce any quantity of an artificial article, chemically and physiologically identical with the natural production ; an announcement calculated

to scare the pessimists who hold that the world is already over-populated.

A German reformer has discovered that the chief impediment to the progress of the race is personal ambition, which can only be got rid of by a general renunciation of names all the world over. Men, however, must have some distinctive designation; so, taking a hint from the practice in vogue at big hotels, he proposes that numbers should take the place of names; every individual being numbered and registered in the district in which he or she lives. He would have a re-numbering every twelve months, by which the acquiring of undue predominance by any one number would be effectually prevented, and the reformation of bad characters much facilitated; since, as no stigma could attach to a number which might this year be borne by a thief, and next year by a philosopher, no one need despair of regaining the esteem of his fellow-men.

A Cabinet minister lately assured us that when all Englishmen were educated, war, so far as England was concerned, would become an impossibility; but Mr Ruskin, as we upon a former occasion remarked, will have it that peace or war depends upon the ladies, and the ladies only; not scrupling to tell the sex, that the real, final reason for all the poverty, misery, and rage of battle was simply that women were too selfish and too thoughtless to take pains for any creature out of their own immediate circles; that if the usual course of war, instead of unroofing peasants' houses and ravaging peasants' fields, merely broke the china upon their drawing-room tables, no war in civilised countries would last a week. 'Let but every Christian lady who has conscience toward God vow that she will mourn, at least outwardly, for His killed creatures. Let every lady in the upper classes of Europe simply vow that while any cruel war proceeds, she will wear black—a mute's black—with no jewel, no ornament, no excuse for an evasion into prettiness; I tell you again, no war would last a week.'

According to some of her advocates, it is the duty of woman to insist upon the sexes being put on an equal footing as regards courtship. To that end, they propose that marriageable youths and maidens should assemble in public meeting, and each write upon a slip of paper the name of the object of his or her affections; the slips to be delivered to two discreet persons, who, upon finding that any youth and maiden had declared a mutual regard, should announce the fact; the announcement to be followed by a wedding in due course. Popping the question by ballot would not meet the views of certain memorialists of the New York State legislature, who beseech that body to abolish 'the present unscientific and vicious system, by which any two of the opposite sex, however ignorant, however diseased, however incapacitated for the responsibilities of parentage, may obtain the sanction of priest or squire to consummate what should be the most holy and delicate of all relations known to human nature.' They desire the appointment of a Board of Commissioners, consisting of an equal number of ethically and medically educated men and women,

with power to investigate the antecedents of candidates for matrimony, and ascertain their physical and mental condition, before granting a matrimonial certificate, without which no person should be permitted to take a partner.

Does it much matter how murderers are despatched? Mr Bain thinks it does, and anxious to mitigate the sufferings of those condemned to give a life for a life, suggests the propriety of substituting the electric battery for the gallows, the garrotte, and the guillotine, and thus 'shock' assassins out of existence. He would even employ the same agent for the punishment of minor criminals. 'By using Faraday's magno-electrical machine, any required amount of torture might be inflicted, and the graduation made with scientific precision, while the mysterious nature of the punishment would add to its horrors; the terrific power exercised by the lightest finger-touch of the operator making the criminal feel his humiliating prostration.' After this, there is something very refreshing in Mark Twain's suggestion: 'I would seriously recommend to the government of the United States, that when a man commits a crime so heinous that the law provides no adequate punishment for it, they make him Consul-general at Tangier. The present Consul-general has been here five years, and has got enough of it to do him for a century. His family seize upon their letters and papers when the mail arrives, read them over and over again for two days or three, talk them over and over again for two or three more, till they wear them out; and after that, for days together they eat and drink and sleep, and ride out over the same old road, and see the same old tiresome things that decades of centuries have scarcely changed, and say never a single word!' And the poor man's offence was the venial one of office-seeking.

Somebody once wrote to the *Athenæum*: 'Permit me to suggest that an edition of Dickens's Works should be brought out in classical English. The words used in the author's text are extremely disagreeable to read. I think that the language of the lower orders ought never to appear in print.' A son of Crispin dared to improve upon *Paradise Lost*; and literary cobblers are ready enough to undertake the mending of the handiwork of mighty craftsmen. Shakspeare's fame has provoked so many extraordinary propositions, that we can readily accept as seriously meant somebody's suggestion that Stratford-on-Avon being difficult to reach, the poet's birth-place should be removed to some town on a main line, more easy of access to his worshippers.

Intent upon doing smokers a good turn, Professor Manlesel would abolish the tobacconist, by supplying every householder with tobacco-smoke free of nicotine and all injurious elements. The tobacco is to be burned in retorts, the smoke produced passing into a large bell-shaped receptacle, to be cooled, purified, and perfumed; and then conducted into the houses by pipes connected with meters, to register the amount consumed. Smaller pipes, carrying the smoke into the various rooms, are furnished with amber-tipped flexible tubes; and all the smoker has to do is to turn a small screw and let the scented smoke glide into his mouth. For those who smoke abroad as well as at home, the Professor



has devised an india-rubber bag, fitting to the chest, vastly improving the wearer's appearance when inflated with tobacco-smoke, to be inhaled through a lute ending in an amber mouthpiece, which when not in use will lie conveniently in the waistcoat-pocket.

## AWARDS TO WORKMEN.

### AN EXAMPLE.

In August 1880, Messrs William Denny and Brothers, shipbuilders, Dumbarton, instituted a scheme of awards among their workmen, to recompense them for any improvements they might introduce upon machines or methods of working, in their shipbuilding yard. The scheme, if not quite unique, was at all events a novel one. It conferred a new and valuable boon upon the workmen, and it was believed it would operate in a manner calculated to inspire them with self-application and self-aid. It has been too long the practice to treat workmen as mere 'hands'; and their skill, inventive ability, and suggestions for better modes of working, have sometimes been discouraged rather than recognised. Among perhaps a large section of workmen an opinion also at one time existed, though not to any extent now, that the introduction and wide application of machinery is antagonistic and detrimental to their interests; but this opinion, as experience has shown, is erroneous. For a time, indeed, a new invention or machine may inconvenience a class, by deranging the old conditions of production; but in the end such improvements benefit all.

In submitting their proposals, which was done by circular handed to every one in their employ, Messrs Denny made a statement to the effect that they had noticed many improvements in methods of work and appliances introduced by the workmen into the yard; that they very readily recognised the advantage accruing to their business from these efforts of skill, and were desirous that these efforts should not pass unrewarded; that, therefore, they had decided that the authors of such improvements introduced after that date should have a claim upon the Firm for reward; and, to enable these claims to be readily and easily adjusted, they had appointed a Committee of Awards. This Committee was empowered to decide on all claims made by the workmen, and to reward successful claims according to certain rules laid down.

The first of these rules bore that any workman in the employ of the Messrs Denny and Brothers might claim an award from the Committee on the ground that he had either invented or introduced a new machine or hand-tool into the yard; or that he had improved any existing machine or hand-tool; or that he had applied any existing machine or hand-tool to a new class of work; or that he had discovered or introduced any new method of carrying on or arranging work; or, generally, that he had made any change by which the work of the yard is rendered either superior in quality or more economical in cost. The second rule—a most valuable one for the inventive workman—was, that in the case of a workman being unable to test the merits of his supposed invention or improvement, either through inability

on his part to make the necessary experiments or to pay for the same, the Firm, on the recommendation of the Committee, might agree to bear the whole, or part, of the necessary expense; and if the invention should afterwards prove a practical success, an award would be granted accordingly. A third rule bore that awards were not to be less than two pounds, nor more than ten pounds; and there were various other rules bearing upon the minor details of the scheme.

The Committee appointed for adjudicating upon the claims was composed of three gentlemen skilled in mechanical science, and of undoubted integrity; it being important that thorough fairness and competent intelligence should guide the Committee in all its proceedings and decisions.

The scheme has now had upwards of a year's trial, and during that period the Committee has had some thirty claims submitted for its consideration, out of which number eight only were not judged to merit an award. As regards the importance of those claims decided to be valid, whilst a few of them were of comparatively little consequence, some were of very great importance, and indeed one claim—that which received the highest award of any granted by the Committee—referred to the invention of a very useful wood-working machine.

These results are amply gratifying and encouraging both to the Firm and to the workmen; and afford full realisation of the hope expressed at the outset by Messrs Denny, that the number of valid and important claims established would be such as to induce a continuation of the practice thus begun.

It was not to have been expected that any improvements of a very radical character would be accomplished as the result of this scheme; for competition in trade is now so keen, and so many are endeavouring to find means of lessening the cost of production, that but a comparatively small section of workmen can be looked to for any very signal achievement. Yet an incalculable advantage would be gained if the bulk of employers of mechanics were induced to encourage improvements on the part of their workmen, by adopting some such scheme as that here referred to.

## MEAT FROM THE ANTIPODES.

It must be an aggravating reflection to the careful housewife that while articles of dress, ornament, household appliances, furniture, and many of those things which add to the comfort of home, are remarkably cheap, the necessities of life should be proportionately dear. The thought must often cross her mind how many little long-wanted things for house or for children could be procured with that golden tribute which each week is claimed by the butcher as a return for finding those joints which so quickly disappear. But she rightly reflects that health is the first consideration, and that it cannot be insured in the absence of plenty of nourishing food. So the butcher's bill is paid with as good a grace as possible. In short, all old housekeepers find, to their dismay, that while the price of manufactured goods, which in a great measure can be dispensed with, has been greatly reduced, the price of meat

has gradually risen, until at the present time its expense is almost prohibitive to those whose circumstances are, from the fixity of their incomes or from other causes, at all straitened.

Any relief from such a state of matters would be regarded as an intense boon; and when it first became known that the countless flocks of Australia were to contribute to the home market, it was thought that the price of meat must speedily sink to a lower figure. The meat duly arrived in tins, and many people tried what they could do with it.

Although it was easy to see that it had been originally of good quality, the cooking process which was essential to its preservation, had certainly knocked it to pieces, so to speak. In other words, it had assumed a stringy, unpleasant form, that was very different from the far-famed Roast Beef of Old England. It soon became evident, therefore, that if the old-fashioned juicy sirloin were to meet with a rival from abroad, that rival must approach in some other guise than tin armour. Inventors were soon busy upon various schemes for solving this important problem. Knowing that putrefaction is altogether suspended in a temperature which is kept below the freezing-point of water, their efforts were directed towards a means of freezing and keeping in a frozen state the meat during its transit from one country to another. This has now been satisfactorily accomplished, and one firm—the Bell-Coleman Refrigerating Company of Glasgow—have at present at work, upon land and sea, machinery capable of freezing one hundred thousand tons of meat per annum. It is the purpose of this paper briefly to describe the means adopted for producing this important result.

Chemistry teaches us that there are various means available for producing an intense degree of cold. The admixture of different salts—to which the name of freezing mixtures has been given—will readily accomplish this on a small scale. The evaporation of liquids will do the same; and the surgeon takes advantage of this property in ether, to direct a spray of the liquid on to any part of the body, so as to freeze, and therefore render it insensible to the touch of his knife. Ammonia is another agent which will also, by its rapid evaporation, produce intense cold. But all these methods of bringing the thermometer down to the point—useful enough for special purposes, where small results only are looked for—would be quite inapplicable to the freezing of even a single carcase of meat. The expense alone would at once shut them out from consideration.

The plan first adopted was to make use of an ice-house, the cold air from which was—by means of a revolving fan—sent continually into the meat-chamber. The disadvantages of this system were many. In the first place, a stock of ice was necessary; and in the second place, the cold air from such a source naturally contained a quantity of aqueous vapour, which had a prejudicial effect upon the stored meat. It is also obvious that the supply of cold air was limited, and must cease when the ice turned into water.

The apparatus by which success has now been attained depends for its action on the well-known physical law that a gas in expanding

from a compressed state produces cold. An interesting example of the cold produced by expansion was afforded many years ago by Professor Brande, in his description of the machinery attached to some mines at Chemnitz, Hungary. A column of water two hundred and sixty feet high pressed upon a quantity of air contained in a closed reservoir. When a stop-cock in connection with this compressed air was opened, its sudden release was accompanied by a shower of snow, due to the freezing of the aqueous vapour contained in the outside atmosphere.

To the uninitiated, the new freezing apparatus, as it stands on shipboard, would seem to be only a complex form of steam-engine; for cylinders and heavy fly-wheels are the most noticeable objects. But only two of these cylinders give motion to the machine; the third is one in which the air is compressed. It is expanded in another part of the apparatus, after being cooled and robbed of its moisture. The cold dry air thus produced is then passed to the meat-room in which the carcasses are stored. These carcasses are by the action of the cold rendered as hard as iron; indeed their average temperature is many degrees below zero; and before they are ready for the cook, they must be very gradually thawed from their frozen condition.

By the apparatus described, not only can meat, vegetables, and nearly every kind of perishable food, be preserved on board ship during transit from one country to another; but similar machines on land will insure like preservation for any length of time. The meat is not in any way injured by the treatment, and is, in the opinion of competent judges, as succulent and tender as if the beasts which furnish it had come direct from our home pastures. It is said that meat from Australia and America preserved in this manner can be sold at a good profit in London at less than sixpence per pound. Looking upon cheap meat as a matter of great national importance, we shall anxiously await the result of this attempt to meet the necessity. If the public are satisfied with the quality of this refrigerated foreign meat, and the supplies are kept abreast of the demand, and at a reasonably moderate rate per pound-weight, the butcher's bill of the future will be a very considerably modified item in the house-keeper's weekly disbursement.

#### CHRYSANTHEMUMS.

Nor in the fairy freshness of the Spring,  
Nor when bright Summer smiles upon the land,  
Nor when rich Autumn with a lavish hand  
Wreathes Earth with golden corn and purple ling;  
But then, when passage-birds have taken wing  
For sunnier climes; when the sere leaves lie dead,  
And moaning through bare branches overhead,  
The mournful wind their requiem seems to sing—  
Yes, then, sweet flowers, when all around is drear,  
Ye come, the heart to gladden with your smile—  
A gleam of brightness ere the Winter near,  
Chasing our sadness with your magic wile.  
Happy their lot, like you, who soothe and cheer,  
And Life's November brighten and beguile!

IDA MARY FORDE.

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